

of the disease, or arrest it if it has already begun. (Wiener, A. S.: *J. Lab. & Clin. Med.*, 31: 1016, 1946; Wiener, A. S.: *Bull. Adelpi Hosp.*, Nov., 1946).

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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

The London Letter

(From our own correspondent)

THE CENTENARY OF ANÆSTHESIA

The centenary of the first public administration of an anæsthetic is receiving adequate recognition at the hands of the Association of Anæsthetists and the Royal Society of Medicine. The celebrations were initiated by the history of medicine section of the Royal Society of Medicine which held a special meeting in honour of the occasion. An interesting, and to most people unexpected, feature of the meeting was the reading of a paper which gave good reasons for believing that two Scotsmen in Dumfries had performed an amputation on an etherized patient a month before Liston's famous operation in London on December 21, 1846.

This meeting was followed by the opening, by Lord Moran, of an exhibition of anæsthetic apparatus and literature at the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum.

The section of anæsthetics of the Society have held a reception to mark the occasion, while the celebrations organized by the Association of Anæsthetists included the unveiling by the Princess Royal at the Royal College of Surgeons of a plaque commemorating four pioneers of anæsthesia. There has also been an exhibition of anæsthetic apparatus at the Royal College of Surgeons. By a happy coincidence these celebrations coincide with the first appearance of a new journal, *Anæsthesia*, which is to be published quarterly by the Association of Anæsthetists.

Anæsthesia has had long to wait before receiving adequate recognition as a specialty, and there are still some who regret the development. The vast majority of the profession, however, now realize that the increasing complexity of modern anæsthetic practice renders specialism essential.

CHRONIC RHEUMATISM

The announcement of a grant from the Nuffield Foundation of £100,000, spread over ten years, for the establishment of a rheumatism research centre at Manchester University is the latest development in the campaign against the crippling conglomeration of conditions known vaguely as chronic rheumatism. This grant is in line with the recommendation of the Medical Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health, made last year, that a number of diagnostic and research centres should be established for the study of chronic rheumatism. While fundamental research into the etiology of chronic rheumatism is urgently required, the problem is such a pressing one that palliative measures cannot be ignored, particularly in these days of deficient man-power. It is being increasingly recognized that in its present struggle for industrial and economic recovery the nation can no longer afford the "luxury" of an almost astronomical number of man-hours lost every year because of the ravages of chronic rheumatism.

The news of this grant coincides with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Empire Rheumatism Council. The celebrations have included a reception at the Apothecaries' Hall, attended by a representative of the Minister of Health, a Government luncheon and a reception by the British Council. A welcome guest at these functions has been Professor J. A. Höjer, chief medical officer of the Royal Health Department.

THE CURTIS REPORT

The committee appointed in 1945 by the Home Secretary, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Education to inquire into the care of children deprived of a normal home life with their parents or relatives, has just issued its report. Under the chairmanship of Miss Myra Curtis, the committee has made an exhaustive study of the problem, including visits to 451 institutions, and its report is as constructive in its recommendations as it is brutally frank in some of its criticisms. Reports of institutions where, from lack of separate accommodation, healthy children are kept in confinement among idiot children and sick adults, without occupation or opportunities for play, reveal conditions that are almost Dickensian in their tragedy. Fortunately, these are the exception, but the mere fact that they exist at all indicates the urgent need for reform.

In accordance with modern psychological teaching, the emphasis in all the recommendations of the committee is upon "the need for the personal element in the care of children" and the necessity for not regarding them as "entries in a card-index".

The problem is a vast one, for some 125,000 children are involved, but there can be little doubt that this report has stirred the public conscience and that reform, long advocated by medical and social workers, will soon be carried out.

INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Another event that has been celebrated this month was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology. Founded by Dr. C. S. Myers as a result of his experience in the 1914-18 war, and a business man who was impressed by the possibilities of applying psychological methods to business appointments, the Institute has performed much useful work since its inception, and it is a tragic coincidence that the celebration should have been so quickly followed by the news of the death of Dr. Myers.

At a luncheon held to celebrate the anniversary, Sir Stafford Cripps emphasized the importance of morale in maintaining maximum production in industry. He was unable to give a definite answer to the query as to whether man-hour output was decreasing, but of one thing he was quite certain from his experience of the last year, and that was that when working conditions, management and leadership are neglected man-hour output is poor. As has previously been pointed in this correspondence, this problem of industrial psychology is assuming ever greater importance in the welfare of the nation.

THE FIELD-MARSHAL AND MORALE

It is not only the industrialist who is interested in the problem of morale. The soldier is equally so. And it was a packed and enthusiastic audience that greeted Field-Marshal Montgomery when he delivered the Lloyd Roberts Lecture on "Morale" before the Royal Society of Medicine at the end of October. Dressed in his famous battle dress the Field-Marshal did not mince his words. Here was no attempt to outline a new theory. In that direct style, now so familiar, he outlined the problem as he had encountered it. Leadership, discipline, comradeship and self-respect: these, in his opinion were the four fundamental attributes of morale. Regimental traditions, welfare, good administration and propaganda were important factors, but merely subsidiary ones. For an hour he held his audience engrossed, and his reception at the end clearly showed that one of the most specialized audiences he can ever have addressed was more than satisfied that they had learned much that would be of value to them in their thought and practice.

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